COMPANY E (H NOR GUARD)
1ST BATTALION (REINF) 3D I FANTRY (THE OLD GUARD)
FORT MYER, VIRGINIA, 22211

27 November 1963

SUBJECT: Memorandum for the Record

THRU: Commanding Officer
Honor Guard Company
1st Battalion (Reinf) 3d Infantry
Fort Myer, Virginia, 22211

THRU: ~~Commanding Officer~~ Rse
1st Battalion (Reinf) 3d Infantry
Fort Myer, Virginia, 22211

TO: ~~Commanding General~~
~~Military District of Washington~~ Rec'd 9 Dec
Washington 25, D.C.

→ To Ceremonies Section - for file & ready reference

1. As requested by the Commanding General this memorandum for the record states the activities which took place on Friday evening, 23 November 1963.

2. At approximately 1700 hours I boarded an H-21 helicopter at Fort Myer with an eight man Army Casket Team. Upon landing at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, at approximately 1730 hours, I reported to Captain Patton, special events officer, Military District of Washington, while Sgt Welder, E-6, marched the team to an area just outside the Air Force Cordon.

3. Captain Patton instructed me to be prepared to take three courses of action. First, that the Army Casket Team would remove the remains from the Presidential Aircraft. Second, that a joint service casket team would be formed if personnel from the other services arrived prior to the arrival of the aircraft. Third, that the Presidential Aircraft had radioed that Secret Service Agents aboard the aircraft would remove the Presidents casket.

4. The second plan was placed in action as representatives from each service arrived prior to the aircraft's landing. I formed two(2) joint service teams. One would accompany me on a [illegible] lift truck and secure the remains from the aircraft and place it on the truck. The bed would then be lowered and the second team would remove the remains from the truck and place it either in an ambulance or helicopter.

5. Immediately after the aircraft landed and the truck was moved up to the aircraft, I reported to Brigadier General McHugh, President Kennedy's Air Force Aide. He then ordered me to have my men clear the area and also informed me that the Secret Service would remove the casket from the aircraft. I then instructed my men to decend from the truck by a ladder on the side. Seeing that the casket was being poorly handled, I had two(2) men remain in place on the truck. We assisted General McHugh and the agents until they had the casket out of the aircraft.

6. The casket was made of solid bronze and was extremely heavy. Mrs. Kennedy, Mr. Robert Kennedy, and the majority of the [illegible] truck which then ascended to the bottom level.

7. The second casket team was at the left side of the truck and as it moved forward to secure the casket was disrupted by a host of agents moving forward pushing the team out of the way. The agents then placed the casket in an awaiting Navy ambulance.

8. I also placed a joint eight man Army, Air Force Honor Guard at the entrance of President Johnson's helicopter. These men were chosen left over after the two (2) joint teams were formed.

Samuel R. Bird

SAMUEL R. BIRD
1st Lt Infantry
OIC - Joint Service Casket Team